Dear Students,

I hope you are doing well and taking care. We know that the global pandemic has impacted our community in difficult ways this summer. The purpose of this email is to share the information we have currently about how this situation may affect your student teaching this fall. Our office has been committed to staying up to date with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) information sessions on guidance for school reopening by attending webinars for school superintendents. Additionally, our office continues to work with all our 52 school district partners on student teaching placements.

As you know, the situation is continuously changing, but we are monitoring what schools might look like for the upcoming school year and how this might affect your student teaching experience. We have a lot of information to share, so please read all of it carefully so you’re informed:

**Health and Safety**

- TEA is in the process of updating its plan for reopening schools and has provided that information to school districts on July 7th.

- School districts are currently surveying their communities to collect feedback from students and families to inform school re-opening options.

- In anticipation of further guidance from TEA, each school district has started to develop drafts of plans to address health and safety.
  - Each district will make their own decisions on health and safety protocols. Most districts are basing recommendations from the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and local public health agencies’ guidelines/restrictions.
  - These plans will more than likely include descriptions of enhanced sanitization efforts, resources for health screenings, access to personal protective equipment, workplace and classroom wellness guidance, and social distancing protocols.

- Our office is monitoring each district’s plan. When plans are finalized and confirmed by our school district partners’ student teaching placement offices, we will share information with you accordingly. We anticipate this information by mid-August.

**Instruction**

- TEA has provided school districts with Remote Instruction Guidance for the 2020-21 school year. These guidelines help school districts plan for remote instruction for the upcoming
school year as an option for their students. School districts can offer the following:

- **On-campus** - student plans to participate in on-campus instruction 100% of the time.
- **Remote** - student plans to participate in remote instruction 100% of the time.
- **Hybrid** - student plans to attend a mix of on-campus and remote instruction.

- **Asynchronous Learning** - Does not require all participants to be virtually present at the same time (e.g., self-paced online courses).
- **Synchronous Learning** - Requires all participants to be present at the same time, virtually (e.g., live interactive classes with students and teachers).

- School districts are asking parents to decide how they prefer their children to “attend” school (100% on-campus instruction, 100% remote learning, or a mix of on-campus and remote learning). This will help districts plan the logistics of each instructional model.

**Student Teaching**

- TEA requirements include working with a cooperating teacher, demonstrating proficiency in each of the educator standards, and working in a school setting that usually includes face-to-face instruction. However, student teachers may also participate in the different instructional pathways that school districts *could* offer, including remote instruction.

- The requirement that observations of student teachers must occur face-to-face has been suspended. Observations can be conducted with the field supervisor present synchronously in the virtual teaching space.

**Placement**

OEP will continue to monitor TEA updates/guidance and plans from each of our partners, and we will continue to work on your placements with our partners. The placement timeline we shared in the spring (attached for your reference) still applies:

- **August 2020** - You must be available for any district meetings or faculty supervisor student teaching meetings. It is important that you do not plan travel or important event during the 4 weeks leading up to Student Teaching.

- **August 17-23, 2020** - Your specific placement details that include campus and cooperating teacher information will be shared with you by your assigned faculty member.

- **August 24, 2020** - First day of student teaching

**Texas State Student Roadmap**

- As a student teacher, you will be asked to follow your assigned district’s calendar and handbook of expectations (including any health and safety protocols for COVID-19). However, please also review the university’s information for students as it includes important information about health and safety.
Students at higher risk for complications from COVID-19, as defined by the CDC, can request additional working or learning modifications.

- OEP will work with any request submitted to the Office of Disability Services, but please note that we will not be able to modify any requirements for certification which are set by Texas Administrative Code.

**Communication**

- It is important to check your email daily, so you do not miss time-sensitive communications by OEP, the district, or, later, your assigned faculty supervisor.
- Follow OEP on Instagram for tips, stories, and engagement @TXST.OEP
- Continue to reach out to OEP with any questions by contacting us at oep@txstate.edu

Please continue to self-care and be safe.

Thanks,

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